

1. Growth indicators

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan balances two different, but related, ideas. One is that the city will continue to grow, in numbers of both residents and employees. The second is that the city should manage this growth to ensure sustainability: that resources will be used in a way that will allow future generations to continue to prosper.

The Comprehensive Plan uses its urban village strategy to address both of these ideas. The urban village strategy directs Seattle's future growth to identified urban centers and urban villages because these places already have the infrastructure, services and zoning in place to accommodate that development. These locations will also be priority areas for the City's investments in new capital facilities.

The urban village strategy seeks to achieve the following goals:

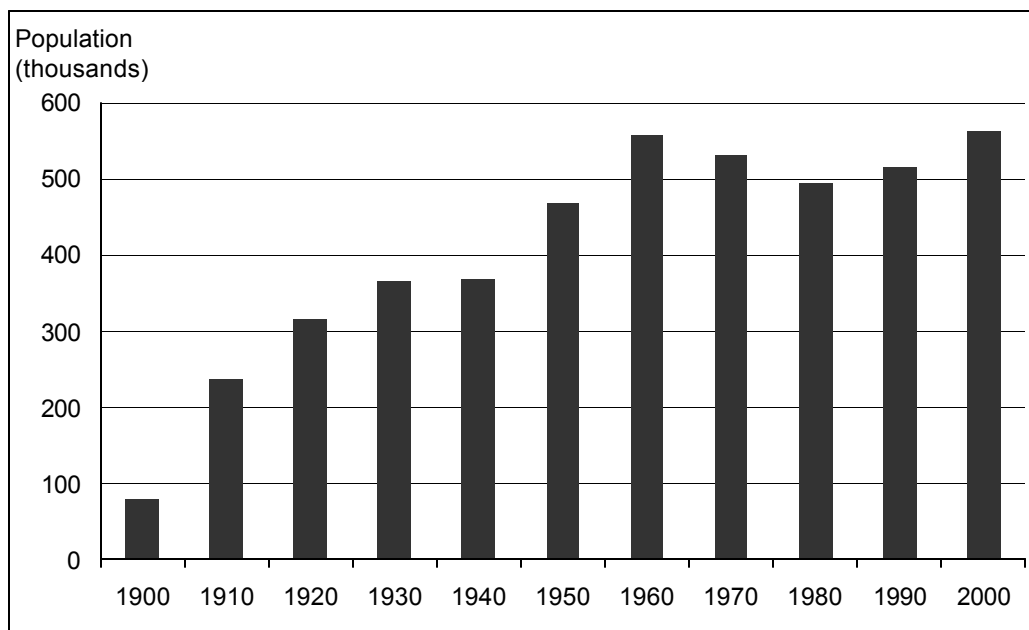
- accommodate the City's share of expected regional growth;
- revitalize existing neighborhood business districts;
- minimize impacts on most single-family neighborhoods;
- make efficient use of past and future City infrastructure investments; and
- promote higher levels of pedestrian and transit travel.

The five urban centers (Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, Uptown, University Community and Northgate) together will take the lion's share of the City's expected new growth. The two dozen urban villages are smaller geographic areas than the urban centers. Concentrations of both commercial activity and multifamily housing are planned for urban villages, at lower densities than will be found in the urban centers. The two manufacturing/industrial centers provide opportunities for current and future industrial businesses to locate in Seattle, providing relatively high-wage jobs that are often accessible to workers without higher education.

This section of the report presents information about how and where growth has occurred in the city. This information can serve as a background for the other indicators presented later in the report.

Seattle's population grew 6 percent during the 1990s to exceed its previous high peak. The new residents of the City are contributing to new housing construction, most of which is being built in the City's urban centers and villages. As population grew, employment grew even faster. Between 1995 and 2000, jobs grew by 17%. In spite of the economic downturn that has occurred since 2000, jobs in Seattle remain much higher than their 1995 levels. However, regionally, jobs grew faster outside of Seattle than inside the city. This has significantly increased the number of residents of Seattle who work outside the city limits. These residents working outside the city limits are leading to changes in travel patterns, and have led to increases in the numbers of cars leaving the city every morning.

Population: Seattle's population has exceeded its previous high-point, 1960.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The 1994 Comprehensive Plan for Seattle provides a strategy for accepting population, households, and employment growth over a 20-year period. As the chart above shows, Seattle's population grew to a record high level in the 1990s. Tracking the changes in this data allows us to monitor the rate at which we are approaching the growth planned for in the Comprehensive Plan.

Estimated Population Growth in Seattle

	1994	2002	Net New Residents 1994-2002
Population	539,100	570,800	31,700

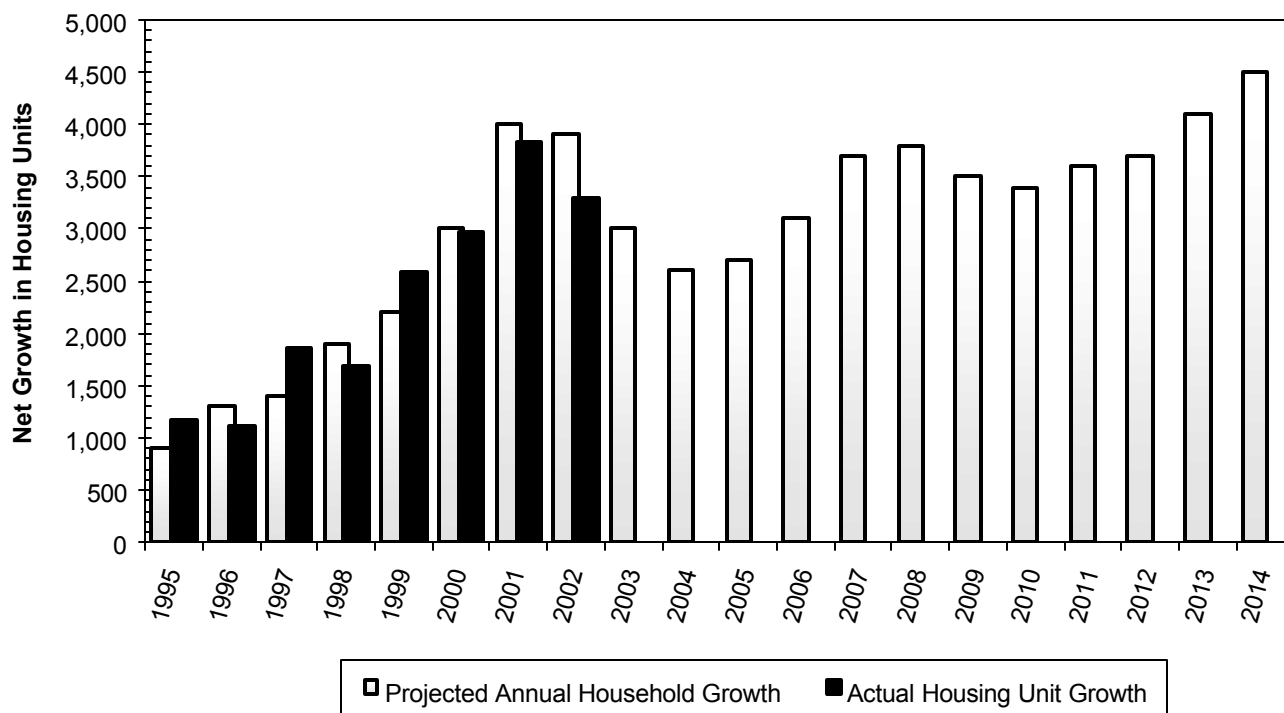
Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, April 1 Estimates

The population figures estimate the total number of people living in Seattle. The change in population from 1994 to 2002 shows that in the first eight years after the City adopted the Comprehensive Plan, the population of Seattle grew by 6%.

The best data regarding where population growth is occurring within the City is from the United States Census. The strongest growth in population in the 1990s occurred in Downtown Seattle, with a 77% growth in residents. The Central Area, North Seattle/Lake City and the Duwamish/Beacon Hill areas all grew by more than 10% over the 1990s. The Ballard/Crown Hill area saw the least amount of population growth in the 1990s.

Housing units: Seattle's housing supply grew by approximately 18,500 units between January 1995 and December 2002.

Over eight years, thirty-one percent of the twenty-year growth targeted for Seattle has been built. Growth for this eight-year period has generally matched a year-by-year projection prepared for the city in 1993, as shown in the chart below.



Studies for the Comprehensive Plan looked at past trends and assumed that the average number of people occupying each housing unit (the household size) would shrink from 2.09 in 1990 to 2.03 in 2000. Instead, the average size of Seattle's households dropped only slightly to 2.08 in 2000. If household sizes continue to remain fairly constant, 41,000 fewer housing units would need to be built in Seattle between 1994 and 2002 to accommodate the projected population growth. In 1960, when Seattle had its previous high population number, there were 2.70 people per household in the City. This meant that only 206,000 housing units were needed to house the 1960 population, compared to the 270,000 housing units available in 2000.

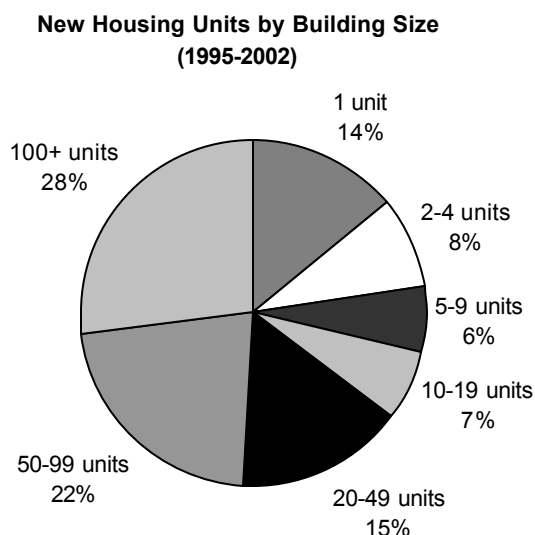
The Comprehensive Plan encourages the majority of residential growth to occur in urban centers and urban villages. The plan encourages 45% of citywide residential growth to be located in urban centers and 30% to occur in hub and residential urban villages. The remainder of housing growth is expected to occur outside of villages and centers. The Plan established housing growth targets for each urban center and urban village. The actual distribution of housing growth to urban centers and urban villages between 1995 and 2002 is similar to the goals contained in the Comprehensive Plan, with slightly more housing than planned being built in residential urban villages, and less housing than planned built in hub urban villages.

	Estimated Share of Housing Growth 1995-2002	Comprehensive Plan Share of Housing
Urban Centers	44%	45%
Hub Urban Villages	11%	15%
Residential Urban Villages	18%	15%
Outside Urban Centers and Villages	26%	25%

A larger share of growth is occurring in some residential urban villages, such as Wallingford and Eastlake than the Plan projected. A smaller share of housing growth is occurring in hub urban villages such as North Rainier and Bitter Lake Village than was projected when the Comprehensive Plan was written. However, the Plan acknowledged that some of the hub urban villages would need more time to grow than areas that already had an “urban village character.”

In addition to the 18,500 housing units built through December of 2002, the City has issued permits for 5,300 additional units which developers had not completed by January 1, 2003. Of those units, 66% will be built in urban centers and villages.

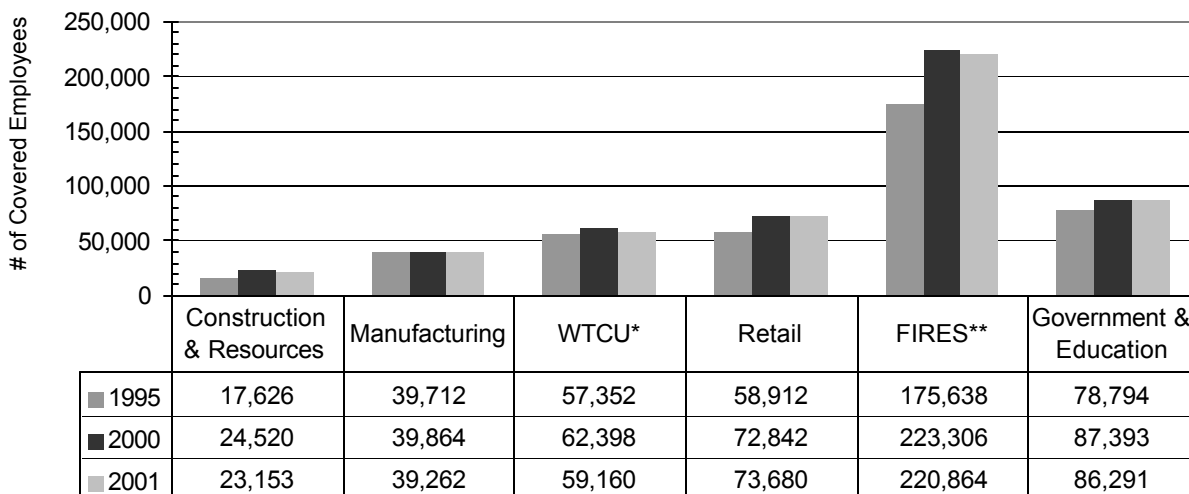
Most of Seattle's new housing units are in multifamily and/or mixed-use buildings. Buildings with more than fifty units contain fifty percent of the new units. Fourteen percent of new units are in single-family buildings. Over four hundred accessory dwelling units account for some of that growth. Smaller multifamily buildings, with less than ten units account for fifteen percent of new units.



Of the units permitted but not yet built, forty-three percent are in buildings with more than one hundred units. Except for two complexes, one at Sand Point/Magnusson Park and the other in the Pike/Pine neighborhood, all of these large multifamily buildings will contain a mix of uses. Out of the fourteen largest active multifamily projects, only two are located outside of urban villages, in South Wallingford, north of University Village and the complex at Sand Point.

Employment: Seattle's job base grew by 74,400 jobs between 1995 and 2001.

**Seattle Covered Employment by Industry
1995-2001**



*Wholesale, Transportation, Construction, and Utilities

**Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Services

In the six years between 1995 and 2001, the City met approximately half of its 20-year employment growth target of 146,600 new jobs. Seattle's job base grew by 17% to 502,000 employees over this period. In 2001 there were approximately 88 jobs located in Seattle for every 100 residents of Seattle.

These numbers reflect a loss of employment in the City between 2000 and 2001. In 2000, the average unemployment rate for King County was 3.2%. In 2001, unemployment had risen to 4.4%, and the county had lost 23,300 jobs. One third of those lost jobs were in Seattle. Seattle contains over half of the jobs in the county, however, so Seattle's employment losses were not as severe as those in other parts of the county.

Over 60% of Seattle's employment growth between 1995 and 2001 was in the collection of industries called the finance, insurance, real estate and services sector, especially in business services. One in five new jobs in Seattle between 1995 and 2001 was in the business services sector. Business services include many high-tech industries. Jobs in business services are concentrated in the center of the city with large increases in business services jobs in the Commercial Core, Belltown, South Lake Union and the Duwamish.

The Comprehensive Plan set a target of 146,600 new jobs as an appropriate level of employment growth for Seattle over the 20 years between 1994 and 2014. The greatest share of that growth is directed to the city's five urban centers, areas that already function as high density, concentrated employment centers with the greatest access to the regional transit network. Other areas targeted for employment growth are the two manufacturing/industrial centers (M/I Centers) and five hub urban

villages. M/I Centers are traditional industrial districts with space for these sectors to grow. Hub urban villages allow room for additional jobs with good access to residential communities.

Estimated and Targeted Shares of Citywide Job Growth

	Share of Job Growth 1995-2001	Comprehensive Plan Share of Jobs
Urban Centers	56%	65%
Downtown	38%	43%
First Hill/Capitol Hill	8%	8%
Northgate	3%	6%
University Community	8%	6%
Uptown	-1%	2%
Manufacturing/Industrial Centers	13%	10%
Hub Urban Villages	11%	15%
Residential Urban Villages	7%	No Target
Outside Centers and Hub Villages	13%	No Target

Over half of the city's new jobs between 1995 and 2001 were located in urban centers, primarily in the Downtown Urban Center. All of the urban centers, except Uptown (Lower Queen Anne) saw employment growth rates that were higher than the citywide employment growth rate. The city's manufacturing/industrial centers accounted for 13% of new jobs in Seattle, with most of those new jobs locating in the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center. Over 20% of the jobs added between 1995 and 2001 were in residential urban villages and other areas outside of the city's targeted employment areas.

Among urban villages, employment growth was greatest in the Downtown Commercial Core. That village accommodated 24% of all new jobs in the city. This increase was equal to a 20% increase in the total number of jobs located in the Downtown Core. The fastest growing urban villages include Ravenna, with a 58% growth in employment over six years; Pike/Pine which saw a 42% increase in employment; and South Lake Union with a 40% increase in employment over five years. The change in employment in the Ravenna urban center village results from increased retail jobs, primarily at University Village. The increased growth in the Pike/Pine urban center village is in both retail employment and in service employment. South Lake Union's growth is driven by the finance, insurance, real estate and services sector with the greatest growth in engineering, accounting, research and management (which includes both for-profit and not-for-profit biological research) and business services.

Employment in Seattle grew slightly slower than employment in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties combined. Most of that regional growth was in areas outside of Seattle in King County. King County outside of Seattle saw a 27% growth in jobs between 1995 and 2001, compared to Seattle's 17% growth. The number of Seattle residents who worked in areas outside Seattle grew 40% between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, almost 1 in 4 employed residents of Seattle worked outside the city, most of who worked in suburban King County.

Transportation Mobility: Traffic volumes increased and travel patterns changed between 1994 and 2001.

As population and employment have grown, traffic volumes have increased, and travel patterns have changed. The number of cars entering and leaving Seattle every day increased by approximately 9% between 1994 and 2002 – a slightly lower rate than the changes in population and employment. Traffic volumes have actually decreased between 2000 and 2002, likely reflecting the slow-down in the economy.

The number of Seattle residents who worked outside Seattle grew 40% between 1990 and 2000. This sharp increase is evident in the pattern of traffic volumes during peak travel periods. Traffic volumes in the traditional peak directions (entering the city in the morning and leaving the city in the evening) have not increased significantly since 1994, while traffic in the non-peak directions has increased by 11 to 13%. Given the higher congestion levels for commute trips into the city and better transit service to downtown, the growth in work trips to Seattle is more likely to be accommodated by transit.

Traffic volumes entering and leaving the downtown area (bounded by Lenora Street, Boren Avenue and Interstate 5, South Jackson Street, and Elliott Bay) have changed little since 1994. Approximately 222,000 vehicles enter and exit the downtown area each day. The most substantial changes since 1994 were a six percent increase in outbound trips during the morning peak hour and a six percent decrease in outbound trips during the evening peak hour. The number of vehicles leaving the downtown area during the evening peak hour is approximately 21,000, while approximately 12,000 vehicles leave the downtown area during the morning peak hour.

The City's primary measure of transportation congestion is called the "volume-to-capacity ratio." This ratio compares the number of motor vehicles actually using a collection of parallel roads where those roads cross an imaginary line – called a screenline – to the amount of vehicles those roads can carry at a reasonable comfort level. If the volume-to-capacity ratio gets close to or greater than 1.0 (the point at which traffic volume equals the theoretical roadway capacity), cars will begin to experience significant delays and backups will occur. The city uses screenlines to measure traffic because this method recognizes that some drivers have the option of choosing among different parallel roads when they are looking for the least congested path to their destination. Generally, congestion is increasing as traffic volumes increase across the city. While the afternoon peak commute hour continues to experience more congestion, the morning commute period has shown higher percentage increases in congestion.

The most congested areas in Seattle are across the Ship Canal, east-west through South Lake Union, the North City Limit, and across the West Seattle Bridge. Travel into downtown from I-5 in the morning is also fairly congested, although it is not as congested in the afternoon. The biggest increases in congestion between 1994 and 2001 have occurred across the Ballard Bridge and in South Lake Union. None of the screenlines has exceeded the volume-to-capacity ratio established as its level of service standard in the Comprehensive Plan.

As traffic congestion has increased in Seattle, some residents are finding other means of getting around. The number and percent of Seattle commuters using transit, walking, or riding a bike to work increased between 1990 and 2000. Between 1994 and 2001, the number of trips taken on Metro Transit in Seattle increased from fewer than 53 million to over 60 million trips annually. With a new light rail line

and new monorail now planned for Seattle, the number of transit trips within Seattle is expected to increase even higher over the next ten years.